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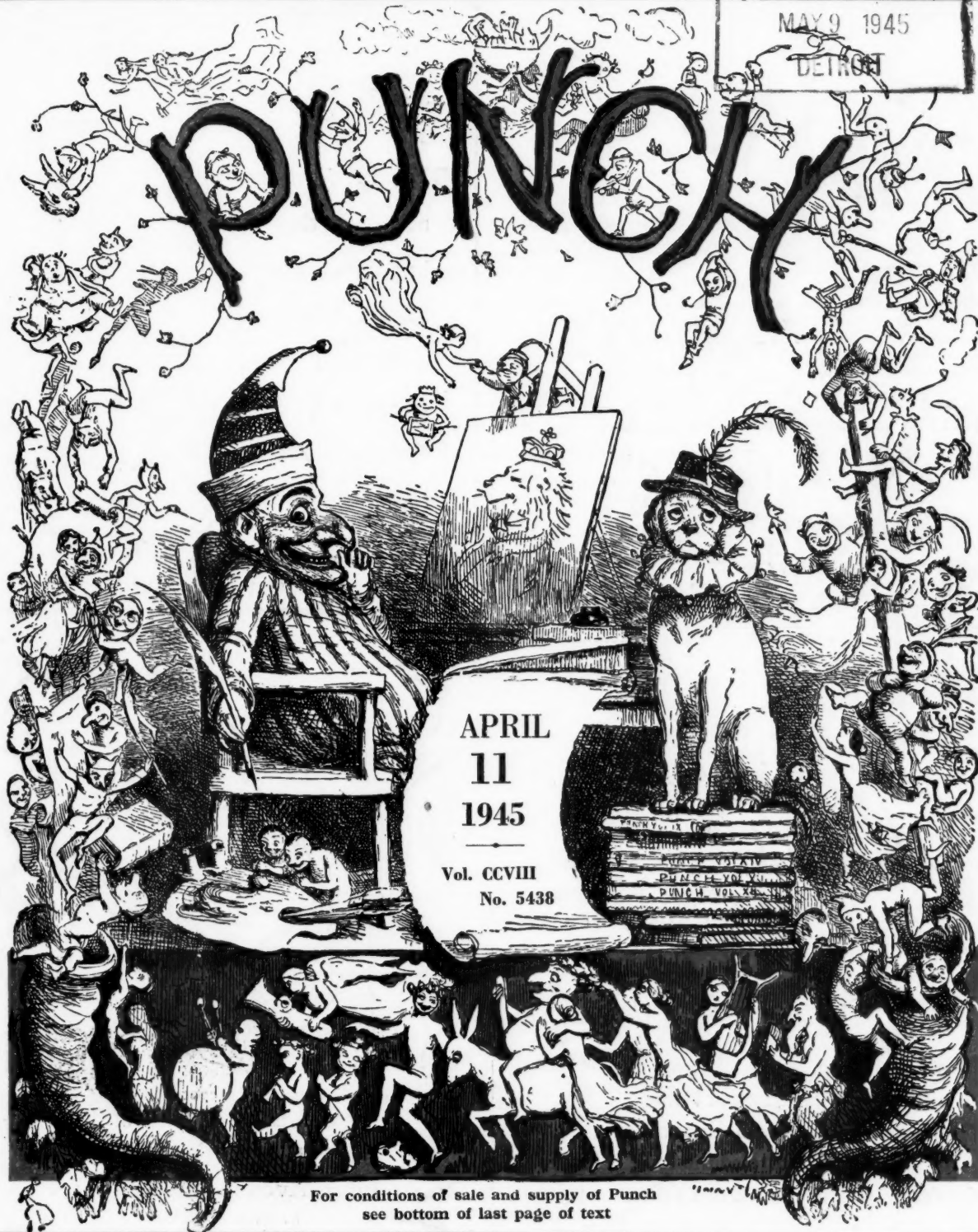
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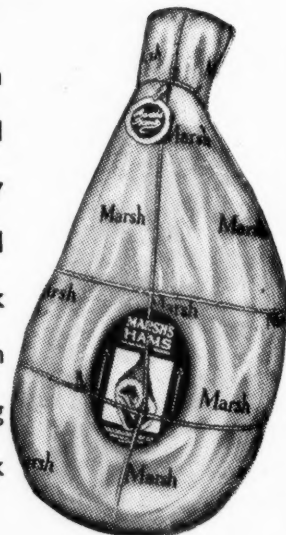
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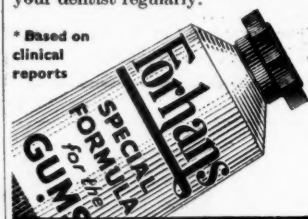


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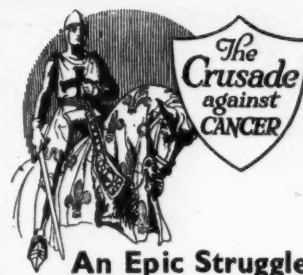
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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCVIII No. 5438

April 11 1945

Charivaria

WHEN Patton and Tolbukhin have cut Germany in two the Unconditional Surrender terms will be doubled.

There are reports of organized looting in threatened German towns by the *Volkssturm*, which apparently has been granted equal privileges to those enjoyed by S.S. units.

Italian prisoners of war recently escaped from a British camp. They took no unnecessary risks. They waited until the party of German prisoners had been safely rounded up.

Spring cuckoos are scarce this year. It is thought that the main body will not arrive until the de-requisitioning of private residences has been completed.



"Holidays outside England will be impossible this year," according to an authority. For those who decide to lump it here, however, there will be full arrangements everywhere.

You Can't Have Everything.

"I was a rather precocious child, and wrote hymns and prose works at the age of eleven; but not Plato in the original at the age of seven."—Dean Inge in the "*Evening Standard*."

A cricket knock-out competition is to be inaugurated. This news has caused much satisfaction among all-in bowlers.

Spinach has been discredited by American nutrition experts. Now at last someone will be able to write a popular treatise on it.



It was said of a small boy who appeared in a juvenile court that he had thrown a stone at his grandmother. Apparently he had got very exasperated by her offers to teach him to suck eggs.

Many people are booking holiday accommodation personally instead of writing. Armoured spearheads have been reported advancing on Whitsun.

The Allies have caused such havoc in Germany that the Junkers are giving up hope of a really pukka next war and are resigning themselves to planning for the one after.

Having shot most of his friends, his party men, and his generals, Hitler is now concentrating upon his bolt.

The Winner Also Ran.

"Red Rower has not run since. I am sure he is a most improved 'chaser, yet I doubt whether he will completely turn the 1942 Gold Cup tables on Red Rower, who then finished five lengths in front of him."—*Daily paper*.

Searchlights will be a feature of London's Victory Day illuminations. There is a feeling among housewives that the most considerate fishmonger in the metropolis should be floodlit.



Now that it is impossible to deny that the war in the West is practically won our diehard pessimists are beginning to warn us that the peace isn't over yet.

"I haven't seen a fillet steak for years," complains a London correspondent. If he could snatch a week-end in the country he would see plenty, as well as rump, point and chateaubriand. And off-the-ration oxtails, too.

The Loup-Garou

THE decision of the Germans to become werewolves instead of world conquerors is characteristic of their sudden changes of military policy throughout the war.

No sooner has one technical device proved insufficient to overcome the Allies than they turn their attention to another. The Tiger tank loses its magic, the V-bomb site becomes a marshalling yard for vampires, the storm-trooper is turned overnight into a hobgoblin and practises metamorphosis in the Bavarian hills.

Military correspondents, like myself, find this extremely annoying.

When I last dealt with the strategy of the Nazi leaders they had determined to hold a final redoubt in Central Europe, to fight in a heroic manner with Hitler at their head, and Mussolini in their rear, and to proceed instantly after death to Valhalla. I took some trouble, which I now regret (for I am a busy man and do not care to waste my time over trifles), to explain to my readers the topography and the amenities of Valhalla. I discussed the position of the god Odin (or Woden) in Valhalla. I did my utmost to detail the possibilities which lay in front of Himmler, and the probable activities of the Gestapo in the underworld.

Apparently this plan has now been cancelled by the General Staff, and the German boy-soldier has been obliged once more to change the whole of his academic curriculum.

It is a startling change. Werewolves do not dominate the globe, and they do not go to Valhalla.

"What are we doing this term, Frederick?"

"For world supremacy under Herr Wiesel, and Nordic mythology under Doktor Stinktrier, lycanthropy under Herr Professor Stote will substituted be."

No keen student of strategy can afford to neglect this new development, tiresome though it may be to have his prophecies upset. My prediction, therefore, is that spearheads of the British, American, Russian and French Armies will now meet in converging pincer-movements above or around a woody terrain defended by troops using a magic ointment or a magic girdle to transmute their spirits into those of wild animals; and this form of opposition may prove embarrassing not only to paratroops and infantry, but even to Intelligence Officers and Military Police.

Mere sabotage does not make the werewolf, as many of our daily papers seem rather lightly to assume. A far higher degree of technique is involved. I need hardly quote Verstegan, who points out acutely in *The Restoration of Decayed Intelligence* (1625) that these creatures "doe not onely unto the view of others seem as wolves, but to their owne thinking have both the shape and nature of wolves . . . and dispose themselves as very wolves."

Every honest student will agree with him, and it is therefore very hard to say whether a werewolf is a man looking like a wolf, or a wolf looking like a man, or both together, or a bit of each, or whether the process of alteration starts at the head or the tail. Mechanized infiltrating units followed by mopping-up parties will have to look out for all six.

It has been said that there is plenty of sound evidence for witchcraft, but there is far sounder evidence for werewolves, and if you live in the right part of the world you can be a weretiger, or a wereleopard, or a wereshark,

or a werealligator. One might say that you could be a wereherr.

You have to go into a trance to be a were anything, while your soul passes into the body of the relevant animal. You cannot be killed by any but a silver bullet, and you must be buried at the crossroads with a stake through your heart. Otherwise you keep roaming around at night and drinking human blood.

There is no record that the life of a werewolf is a really happy one, though Herodotus says that the Neuri in Scythia turned themselves into wolves for three days every year. Very likely it was a staggered holiday. The Bulgarians call a werewolf a vrkolak, and I am far too much a citizen of the world to attempt to dissuade them. It seems fairly probably that if you were an Eskimo you could become a werewallrus, if you had no better way of employing your time. Women may be werewolves, and werehyænas have been found with gold earrings in their ears, so there need be no complaint from feminists. Probably the most lovable of all these manifestations is the werehippopotamus of Central African tribes. If you are wounded while you are being a werewolf, the mark will appear in the corresponding place on your human body. St. Patrick changed Veretius, King of Wales, into a wolf, but I cannot remember why, or what happened afterwards.

No contributions, either in prose or verse, submitted by werewolves, will be accepted by this paper, and the Editor's decision is absolutely final.

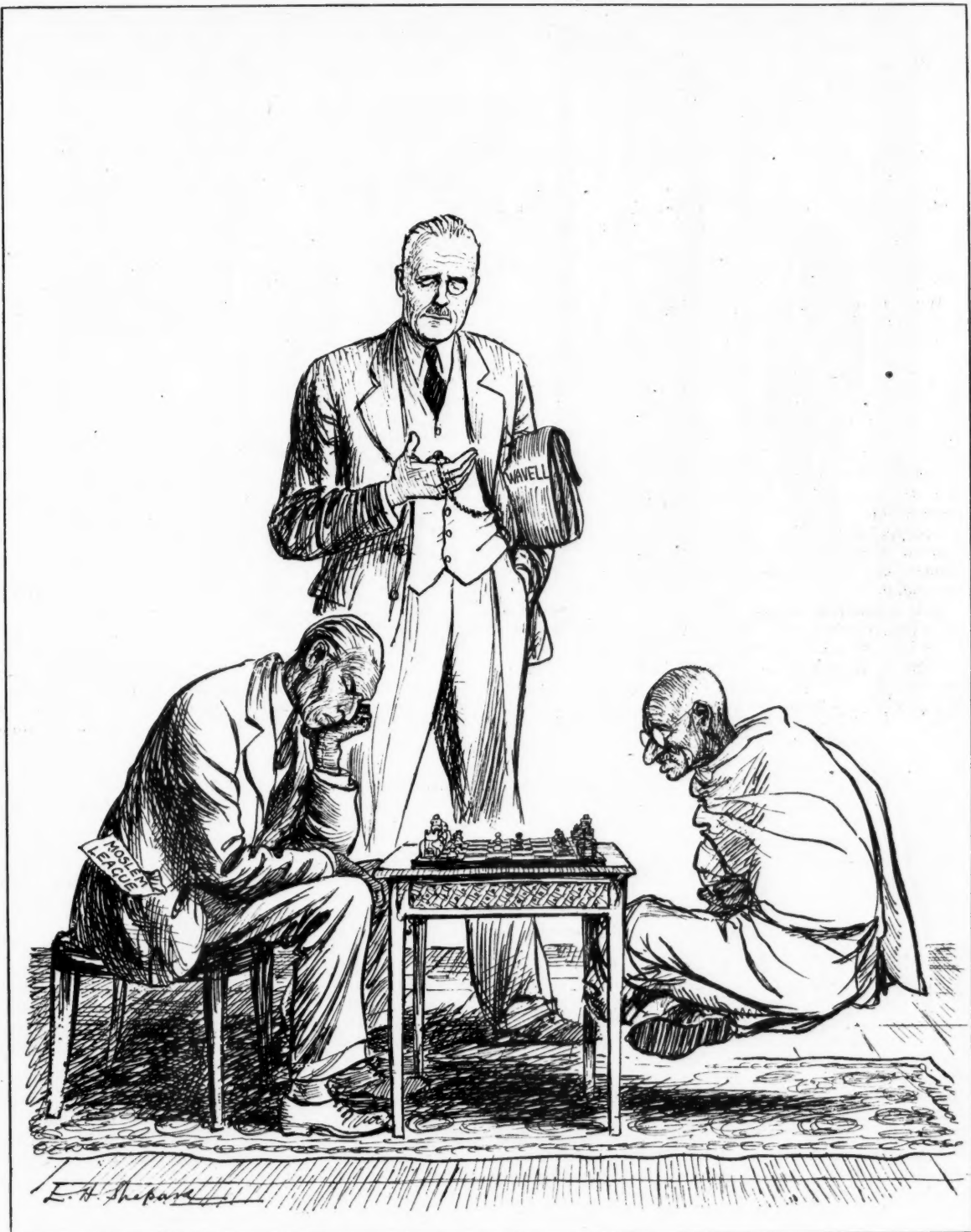
All this goes to show that the decision of the Nazis should be taken seriously by the Allied governments and by their generals in the field. Silver bullets should be issued to all units and silver bombs dropped on Berchtesgaden or Berlin. If Goering or Hitler or Himmler are dead, they are not dead. They are probably "dwammung." Dr. Goebbels is most likely a werefrog. Too often our scientists have failed to keep pace with the diabolical inventions of the enemy. They must not fail us again. Furthermore, it will be very difficult to put war criminals on their trial when they prove to the jury that they were wercriminals with astral bodies in one place and human bodies in another at precisely the same moment of time. The defence comes very close to an alibi.

EVOE.

Sad Sonnet

THE problem facing the Select Committee
Was this: providing homes for—as a target—
Three million homeless. "It would seem a pity,"
Opined the Chairman, "that a group from Margate
Be told to live upon a Scottish braeside,
Or bombed-out Bristol dockers be requested
To live in Penge. But, looking at the gay side,
It might be better that all means were tested
Before we tried (for even stop-gap building)
To requisition ground held by far-seeing
Big Business groups, whose gingerbread needs
gilding."

With which the whole Committee then agreeing,
They placed their hats upon their pensive domes
And went back to their houses, hearths and homes.



TIME FOR A MOVE



"Oh, Mr. Gimbel, would you mind just settling an argument?"

The Memoirs of Mipsie

By Blanche Addle of Eigg

VIII—Sables and a Starved Soul

THERE is many a lonely heart beating beneath a diamond *parure*. Golden lorgnettes may conceal tear-dimmed eyes. Underneath a chinchilla rug white hands may clench till their knuckles shine like knuckle-bones in the effort of self-control over some slight, some wounding hurt. . . . This was my poor sister's fate in those early years, when all the world seemed to smile on her and only her intimates knew that life for her was a hollow mockery.

In those days of course an unhappy marriage was screened from the prying eyes of Society by a dignified façade, instead of being paraded before the whole world as it is to-day. For

twenty years poor Blousie Banting (Lady Louise Banting) wore heavy oriental bracelets to conceal the cruel bruises which her husband made by gripping her wrists because—although a brave man in other directions—he was terrified of going upstairs to bed. Lord and Lady Slough of Despond never spoke to each other after their honeymoon, yet the little notes which they wrote to each other on household matters were models of old-world courtesy and always written on the best notepaper. Nowadays what a change do we see! "How I do dislike my husband," a young married peeress, who had better be nameless, said to Addle at a dinner party shortly before

the war. My husband, unable to believe his ears, thought she must be talking of dustbins and replied: "Smelly things, I believe"—a remark which puzzled her exceedingly. But to return to Mipsie.

I only wish I could have helped her more during those difficult times, but I myself married before long and was naturally absorbed in my own happy home. Addle, too, though the soul of chivalry as a rule, somehow lacked a finer perception of my sister's rare character. I remember recounting to him how I had found Mipsie in tears one day over one of Bovo's typical acts of brutal freakish humour. She had, the previous week, suddenly

SOCKS

"DEAR Mr. PUNCH,—It may comfort you to know that my favourite pair of socks bears the cheery label of your Comforts Fund.

"These socks were given to me in the beginning of the war and served through the Flanders campaign and more than twelve months of trapesing across deserts in the Middle East. The wool is matted and apparently quite hole-proof, in fact I feel that a testimonial parodying the old Pears Soap tramp advertisement is their just due—something on the lines of 'since then I have worn no other.'

"Thank you, Mr. Punch."

(Signed) G. W. A., *Capt.*

Donations will be most gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.

Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940

realized that she could not meet all her bills out of her allowance, which, though adequate, had its limits unfortunately. Punctilious to a fault, she had immediately passed them on to her husband, but in order to soften the slight shock they might cause (for the total was a big one) she packed them in an empty cigar box of his favourite brand and sent it through the post. Bovo said nothing, much to Mipsie's relief, which changed to joy and gratitude the following day when she found on the hall table a package addressed to her in her husband's handwriting, containing—a morocco tiara case! Eagerly she unfastened the catch, only to find an empty case stuffed with the receipted bills. Her bitter disappointment may well be imagined. Yet Addle, when he had heard the piteous story, only remarked "Good chap, Briskett," and changed the subject. How loyal men are to each other, and how insensitive are the best of them to these little barbs that pierce the gentler sex!

Mipsie found consolation in intellectual and artistic interests, and especially in helping on young adventurers in both fields. "Another of Mipsie's musical pursuits," I once heard Bovo mutter, when my sister had sprung up and impulsively followed from the room a handsome and talented violinist who had just played exquisitely at a

soirée. "What do you want with these fiddlers?" he asked crossly when she returned. "Fiddling can be very beautiful," replied Mipsie simply. But I happened to glance down at her lap. She was tearing a delicate seed-pearl rope into a thousand shreds.

Thus life continued, inwardly so sad, outwardly so gay. Who will ever forget the Chine House receptions, where ambassadors fought with premiers for ices, and even royalty lost hairpins, if nothing worse, in the crush? Mipsie's cotillions were always the gayest in London, her favours the most lavishly bestowed. A minor war was started because a certain potentate put his empty plate down on a neighbouring Begum's bare shoulder, mistaking it for a mahogany slab. On another occasion a long political quarrel was healed when the two statesmen concerned found themselves wedged for a whole evening between a marble Diana and her stag. Mipsie herself was a dominating influence in politics and the confidante of many great men. "Will there be war, Lord Salisbury?" she boldly asked the premier at the time of the Boer troubles. "There may be or there may not, Duchess," he replied. "It is impossible to say." Such frankness at such a time shows his trust and high opinion of my sister.

Speaking of foresight over wars reminds me of a delightful story of my dear husband, which I cannot resist

telling in conclusion. During the Munich crisis Addle, who is one of the most far-seeing men I know, suddenly realized that the European situation was far from calm, and with that thought he began to worry whether his beloved country was fully prepared for the event of war. He conceived the wise and splendid plan that there should be some form of officers training corps at public schools, so that the boys who were the future upholders of our race should learn, as he put it simply, "to hold a rifle like a gentleman." He spent many months in working out the whole scheme, which he proposed to put to the Lords when completed, and actually got as far as going over to Eton, his old school, to consult the headmaster on the subject. It entailed missing his afternoon nap, but Addle is not the man to shrink from duty. At Eton, however, he discovered to his amazement that there is actually a system installed on very similar lines at every public school, only it had slipped his memory. Furthermore, a school contemporary of his whom he happened to meet taking his great-grandson to Rowlands, reminded Addle that he himself had been in the shooting eight one year when Eton had won the Ashburton Shield. But the lofty idea and the work the scheme entailed remain the same, even though others had thought of it before. It is just another case of "great minds thinking alike."

M. D.



"I don't know who he is—the children brought him back from their evacuation village."

At the Pictures

GOOD BITS

As I write, nothing of very great interest has turned up in London; several promising films begin just after this page goes to press. From the heap of assorted minor works, nearly all of which contain bits that are for one reason or another worth seeing (sooner or later I shall have to write a reasoned statement of the point of view that it is possible to take real pleasure in portions of a film that as a whole is no particular good—many people seem unable to grasp this idea), we may as well pick *Music for Millions* (Director: HENRY KOSTER) to begin with. If you saw *Two Girls and a Sailor* (with JUNE ALLYSON and JIMMY DURANTE) and *Thousands Cheer* (with JOSE ITURBI) it would be possible for me to convey to you a pretty accurate impression of what goes on in this picture, in which these three talented people appear again, but perhaps the film is hardly worth elaborate subtleties of description. It is about a girl who plays in an orchestra conducted by Mr. ITURBI and managed by Mr. DURANTE, and contains the remarkable infant MARGARET O'BRIEN and some passages of fancy cutting (e.g., orchestra—train—orchestra—train, while the orchestra plays what is usually called Beethoveniana—though the credit titles do not include Beethoven among the composers whose music is used). I saw this, and I would see it again, for the sake of JIMMY DURANTE (fans of his broadcast *Comedy Caravan* may be interested to hear that he sings the whole of his song about "Umbriago"). There is quite a bit of good and well-played orchestral music, but it is vitiated for the serious listener by the director's assumption that compositions of any length, with any pretensions to seriousness, need constant visual interruption to make them tolerable. But after all, what is the serious listener doing at a film like this?

The new BING CROSBY picture, *Here*

Come the Waves (Director: MARK SANDRICH), is rather overloaded with propaganda; it was made, I believe, at a time when recruiting for the "Waves" was more necessary than it is now. These earnest energetic marchings, this conscientious radiance do not seem to fit very well with the passages of melodrama, light music and farce in a plot that relies on heavy misunderstandings kept alive (it sometimes appears) by main force; but here again I found bits to enjoy in a piece it would be absurd to describe as a good film. One was the blackface scene, in which Mr. CROSBY and SONNY TUFTS together do in the nigger-minstrel manner a humorous novelty song called "Accen-tu-ate the Pos-itive."



J.H. DOWD.

(Here Come the Waves)

CROONER'S TRAVELS

Johnny BING CROSBY

I could see this episode again with pleasure; and also the burlesque of a Frank Sinatra show at the beginning (the story is based on the Sinatra legend, and Mr. CROSBY, like nearly all skilful comedians, is a good mimic). BETTY HUTTON, who has often been praised for her quieter moods as well as her noisier ones, is here given two parts—one for each set. Take your choice.

The British film, *The Man From Morocco* (Director: MAX GREENE)—no connection with the Edgar Wallace book—is full of scenes in which the acting (through no fault, I think, of the players') somehow suggests the clichés in which the behaviour it represents would, in a second-rate novel, be described. Thus the scene in which ANTON WALBROOK carries and attends

to a youth who is ill seemed to me to be positively hammering in the phrase *as tenderly as a woman*—though nobody audibly used it. This will perhaps be thought hyper-sensitiveness on my part, but mentioning it appears to me the best way of conveying an impression of this earnest, irritating, slow picture, with its exceedingly hammy and pretentious dialogue and its wasted theme.

I went hopefully to the new OLSEN and JOHNSON work, *See My Lawyer* (Director: EDDIE CLINE), only to discover that the reason why it appeared first at the Astoria and not at one of the big "first-run houses" was all too obvious. The marks of makeshift, of hurried heaping-together, are all over this piece; and it is padded out with variety turns that are supposed to be in the show at a restaurant—we see the turn, then we see the audience applauding—but I'm pretty sure the one I recognized as having been in a short film some time ago (the "Penny Arcade" song) is not the only fragment here that has been used before.

The boisterous, disruptive pair themselves have their amusing moments, but not enough. There is some good crazy stuff in the court scene near the end (as the offended witness begins his tale of woe, a door opens behind his chair and out comes a gaunt soulful violinist to play background music for him) and, though I hesitate to admit it, OLSEN and JOHNSON's cumulative, sledge-hammer methods do sometimes wring and bash laughter out of me by sheer continuous, persistent energy. But I sigh for another *Hellzapoppin*, which was a scientifically-balanced mess of all the things people laugh at, into the mixing of which went real skill, experience and thought. *See My Lawyer* is a "B picture," with OLSEN and JOHNSON bundled into it in the belief that their mere presence and a few violent practical jokes will elevate it to the Big Time. R. M.

"Queues for the pie and fish-and-chip shops create a holiday air."—*The Observer*.
A busman's holiday air.

Briefing

["Sometimes specially bad briefing officers are chosen so as to prepare crews for the worst."—From *"The Aeroplane."*]

BRIEFING Officer. Well, chaps, I'm the bloke who's supposed to tell you what to do. I don't know much about it, but then that's why I'm here, or so I'm told. I'm a little vague about it myself.

It's all a little difficult, isn't it? But then it is for me too. Between you and me and the doorpost I've got to be ruddy careful. I'm sent here because I'm a bad briefing officer. So you see if I should accidentally give you a good briefing I should get an adverse report. So you will be careful, won't you, chaps, when you go out of here? I mean, if you start shooting a line pretending to know where and why you are flying I should probably have a strip torn off me.

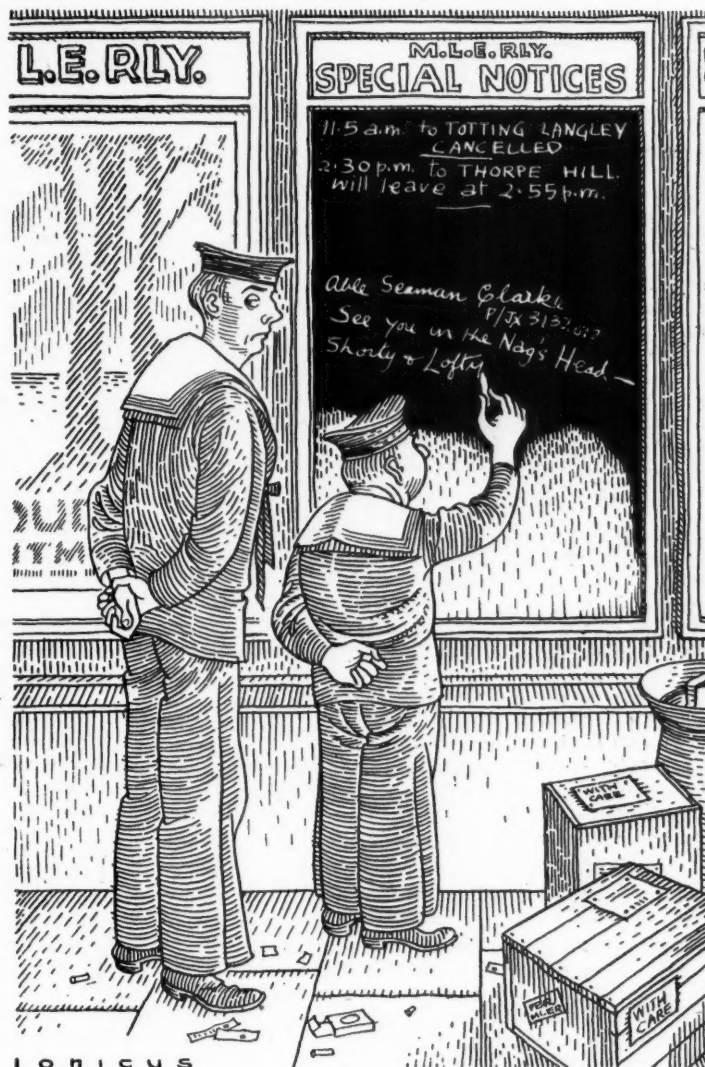
Well, having got that off my chest, I suppose I ought to give you some idea where you're going to fly. Some clever bloke has marked it all out on that chart there. Can't make head or tail of it myself, but perhaps you can. I believe I ought to have worked out all the angles and distances and things, but I never could understand one of those celluloid protractor affairs, and dividers always seem to slip about when I use them. I never was any good at arithmetic anyway. One of you fellows might just work it out for me—that is if you can understand where you're going. If not, we ought to ask someone, but I haven't a clue who to ask.

By the way, chaps, if you are flying along this line here, I believe there's some high ground you'll come across. I think it's high, but if it's not high, then it's low. I always get so confused as to whether they paint these maps green or brown when it's high. Anyway, you'll find out when you get there, I've no doubt.

Now what else am I supposed to tell you? Oh, yes, I know: navigational warnings, balloons and guns and things. You'll find a packet of signals over on that table there. If you can understand them, you're cleverer than I am. But then of course, you probably are. . . .

What's that? What time are you supposed to take off? I don't know. I should think you just go out of here and get into your kites and away you go.

Now I'll hand you over to the pukka gen merchants. Cheerio, chaps. Enjoy yourselves.



Fiddler's Green

OH, Fiddler's Green is the Paradise

Where every sailor goes.
Handsome or ugly, nasty or nice,

Sober or drunk, he knows
That he'll wake up

With a brimming cup

And his pipe where the pubs don't close.

And Fiddler's Green is far from the sea.

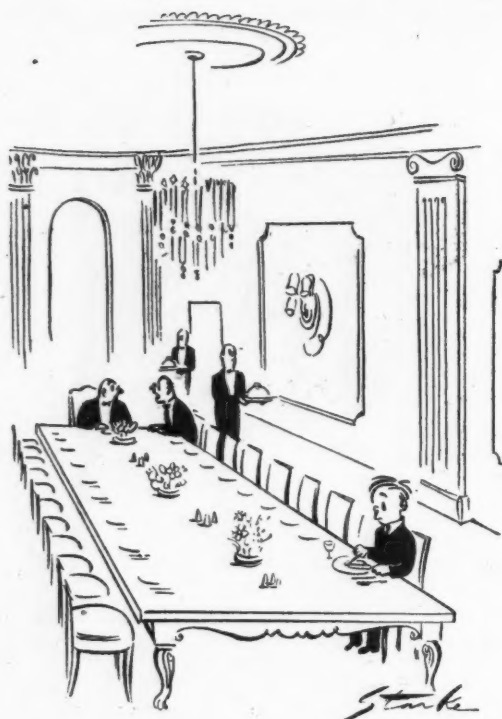
It's always a make-and-mend.
The rum and the women are both quite free.

Nobody lacks a friend.

And fiddlers play
Through the sunny day
That's timeless and has no end.

For never a sailor was quite so good
That he could Saint Peter face,
Nor ever a sailor so bad he should
Be sent to the other place.
So there's Fiddler's Green,
Betwixt and between,
For men of the deep-sea race.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"Don't you think these annual staff dinners are becoming something of a farce?"

The Phoney Phleet

LXIV—H.M.S. "Coppernob"

LIEUTENANT CLYME considered that
The brazen, the Commander's hat
With golden oak-leaves round the peak
Was *tout ce qu'il y avait de plus chic*;
It was his lodestar, goal and aim.
The chap was loopy about same.

He slaved, he laboured more than some,
But still promotion didn't come,
Which simply made the gilded rim
The more desirable to him.
His dreams were filled with nightly sheaves
Of mocking 18-ct. leaves.

Little he knew what lay in store!
Little did anyone else, what's more,
But one day, miles away at sea,
He got a signal—"You're to be
The captain of the *Coppernob*.
Acting brass-hat (whilst holding job)."

Clyme swooned, in fact he fell. A pal
Restored him to the vertical.
From which much more acoustic pose
He rendered eulogies of those
Unknown who'd handed him this bunce.
The signal ended "Join at once."

But where was *Coppernob*? And what?
A secret list disclosed the spot—
Great Bongo, very close at hand;
The *Coppernob* was quite inland,
A school where Bongonese recruits
Were broken in to naval boots.

Still living in his aureate haze
Clyme landed there. For many days
He didn't register. But then,
Then came the searing question—when,
Or rather, *where* to buy THE hat?
How was he going to cope with that?

Great Bongo doesn't run to shops;
There is no local Naval Slops;
And if he ever left this base
For some more brass-hat-bearing place
His right to wear the thing would be
Foregone, as stated in Verse III.

In vain to tell him that his pay
Was shillings, shillings more per day—
The ore he wanted wasn't pelf
He wished to wear it on himself.
His golden dream had turned to dust;
His unworn halo lay there, bust.

* * * * *

Scorning, as grosser men might not
The succour of the pigment pot,
The ersatz, the barbola leaf;
Maintaining an unsullied grief,
He broke a heart too proud to bend;
And shot himself. That is the end.

o o

Lobster Impounded by Court

ANTHONY GEORGE SHOE BRIGHT, said to be no
relation of anyone else of that name, was brought
up at Wellington Street Police Station yesterday
charged with stealing a lobster, the property of William
Black, restaurateur.

A police officer, giving evidence of arrest, said that
when apprehended Shobright had the lobster on his person.
He appeared breathless and was unable to give a good
account of himself.

The Magistrate (Mr. O. Toddy). What do you mean,
"on his person"? Was the lobster concealed?

Witness. It was not, then. He had it in his hand, sir.

Mr. Toddy. I see nothing criminal in that. Have you
had orders to arrest any person carrying shell-fish in the
streets?

Witness. He was going at a run, sir, in a manner of
speaking, holding this fish, and he had after him the best
part of a biggish crowd hallooing and crying "Stop thief!"
I thought the circumstances suspicious, sir, and took him
into custody.

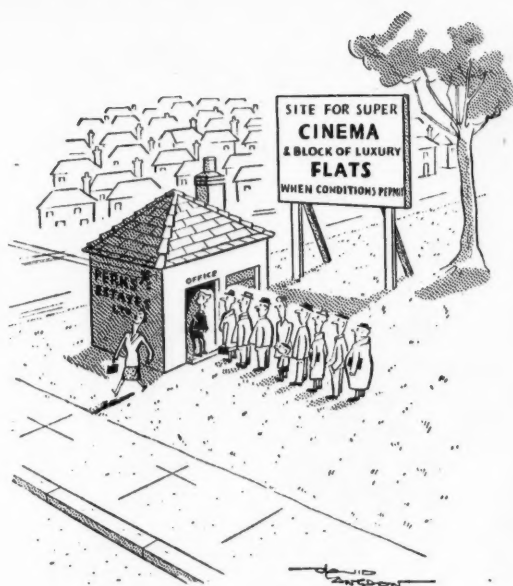
Mr. Toddy. I see. Are there any other witnesses?

A Mr. Knockelbow of Gravesend was then sworn and
deposed that he had seen the defendant come out of a pub
like a stick of glue, carrying a lobster in his hand, and
streak off down the street.

Mr. Toddy. What do you mean by a "stick of glue"?

Witness. Fast, if you take my meaning.

Mr. Toddy. It would be a convenience if witnesses



"I'm afraid the list for flats is now closed, but if you like you can start queuing up for the cinema."

would avoid the use of colloquialisms. Does the defendant wish to ask any questions of this witness?

Defendant. If you please, sir. I am by profession a manufacturer of clinical thermometers, which, as the court will be aware, is a seasonal trade, depending as it does very largely on the incidence of influenza—

Mr. Toddy. You will have an opportunity to make a statement later. If you have any questions to ask this witness, put them now.

Defendant. Right ho, then. Now, my man, you say you saw me carrying a lobster in my hand?

Witness. I do.

Defendant. How do you know it was a lobster?

Witness. Well, it was large and red and had its eyes on the end of stalks, and if that isn't a lobster I'll take it home and eat it.

Defendant. Couldn't it have been a red handkerchief?

Mr. Toddy. Have you got a red handkerchief?

Defendant. No.

Mr. Toddy. Then it couldn't have been one, could it?

Defendant. I am endeavouring to show, sir, that what this witness saw in my hand may have been merely something red, not necessarily a lobster.

Mr. Toddy. You had something red in your hand, then?

Defendant. That I do not admit.

Mr. Toddy. In that case I fail to see—However, is there a lobster in Court?

A lobster was produced and laid on the Clerk's table.

Mr. Toddy. Have you ever seen this lobster before?

The defendant was understood to say that he was only a manufacturer of clinical thermometers and all lobsters were alike to him.

Mr. Toddy. Very well, then. Had you an object resembling this lobster in your hand when arrested?

Defendant. We now come to the most surprising part of the whole business—

Mr. Toddy. Answer the question.

Defendant. Yes.

Mr. Toddy. Where did you get it?

Defendant. That I cannot say, sir. It is most unusual for me to be arrested carrying a lobster. I am allergic to shell-fish, sir, and indeed were I to eat this lobster I should come out in a sort of angry rash, not only on the face and neck, but extending from between the shoulder-blades right down to the loins, sir, if you will pardon the anachronism. My great-grandfather, Edmund Shoebright, who was the first man in Europe to bring mercury to the boil—

Mr. Toddy. Is it a lumpy sort of rash?

Defendant. Lumpy, yes. And sort of scabbled.

Mr. Toddy. Get it after oysters, too, and crab?

Defendant. Bless your heart, sir, I daren't touch oysters. You won't catch a Shoebright eating oysters, not if you live to be a hundred and ten. Unless of course there's a pint of milk beforehand and another to follow.

Mr. Toddy. A pint of milk, eh? Does that stop it?

Defendant. It's worth trying, sir.

Mr. Toddy. H'm. Well, it's been a most interesting case. That is to say, are there any other witnesses?

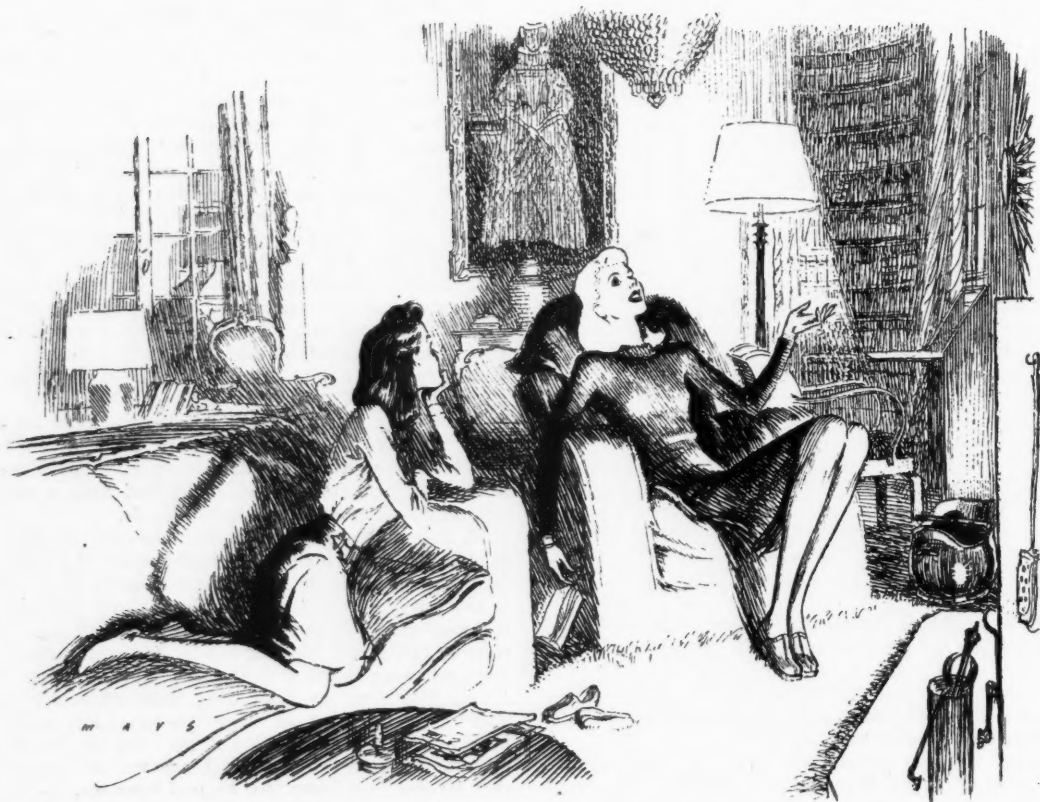
Relatives of the defendant then gave evidence of a number of occasions on which he had broken out in an alarming rash after consuming shell-fish.

Passing sentence of one day's imprisonment, Mr. Toddy said he had been inclined to leniency by the defendant's frank bearing and because of an element of uncertainty in the case. There was no doubt that the defendant had the lobster in his hand when arrested. All the evidence pointed to the fact that the lobster had actually been in his hand when he emerged from the premises of Mr. William Black. But he, the magistrate, was not convinced that Shoebright intended to steal the fish. He might have been in a hurry and picked it up from the snack-bar in mistake for something else. There was evidence in fact that he *was* in a hurry, for he had been seen to leave the premises at a run. Though it might be, said Mr. Toddy, amid laughter, that having taken the lobster he was anxious to get with all speed to a milk-bar.

The magistrate directed that the lobster be impounded by the court and that the sum of eleven and sixpence be paid to Mr. William Black, restaurateur. H. F. E.



"I see the Bennetts have given their wretched child a set of carpenter's tools."



"When I get married it will be to a fascinating middle-aged man of about twenty-seven."

A Little Late This Year

*Spring is coming, spring is coming,
Birdies, build your nests;
Weave together straw and feather,
Doing each your best.*

BELINDA SHOETOPS.

THESE lines, gentle reader, are noteworthy not only for their exquisite imagery and cadence but because they hold a great truth—a truth rarely observed by writers of either prose or poetry. It is this—that spring arrives only after a long-heralded approach. There is no sudden gust of spring in Nature; only a long-drawn-out rustle. In literature spring enters without knocking, almost as if she had a latch-key. One moment winter is in possession and the next he is out on his ear. Yet there is a law against the summary eviction of tenants.

Wordsworth and Coleridge, Browning and Tennyson, Sheets and Kelly—

all have erred in this matter. And the novelists are even worse. Look at this:

"Bennett opened his eyes. Then, one by one, he rubbed them. The atmosphere of the little stripey room seemed translucent, transparent even. Strange wisps of colour flecked the bedsteads, the wash-stand and the walnut what-not. From far away, in some other electoral district, came the thin cries of pranking schoolboys.

"For a moment Bennett lay inert, supine. Then, as if galvanized by some tonic, he leapt from the sheets and danced round the room. 'Eureka,' he sobbed, 'Eureka — spring is here. . . .'"

(SHAUN WARPLES, *Devilled Kidneys*.)

And this:

"'It's it,' said Kate, 'really it.'"

"She had been waiting for this moment for a very long time. She

seemed to itch all over. A flake of plaster fell from the ceiling, symbolically. Kate struggled to her feet, filled her lungs greedily at the open window and brushed her hair. Then, her eyes smarting with ozone, she rushed from the room shouting 'Spring, spring, spring, spring, spring. . . .'"

(MOLLY BOSSOMS, *My Sister Sarah*.)

No, spring is not like that. The birds and the beasts know better.

That was not spring we had a week or two ago. Yet Robertson and Chapman (in our office) and thousands of other poor dupes of the literary giants were completely taken in—casting their clouts, oiling their bats, ogling the girls and quoting verse by the quatrain.

And all because of a couple of warmish days, which might well have been this year's summer but were certainly not spring. HOD.



THE WEREWOLVES

"Of course it's rather hard to do the goose-step like this."



"Anything good in the 'write a script for Burbage' competition?"

"No, nothing much: there's a thing called 'The Prince of Denmark' by someone signing himself F. B. that MIGHT do, if we get that fellow Shakespeare to touch it up a bit."

What a Word!

PARDON our absurd remoteness from practical life, but what exactly is a "task-force?" Or rather, in naval or military operations, what is *not* a task-force? They used to be naval only; now we see they have appeared on land, on the Continent. But surely all the "columns", "spear-heads", divisions and army groups which are (as we write) cascading across Germany have something to do? So, by the way, have the comparatively non-combatant sappers and pioneers. So, we repeat, when is an active service force *not* a task-force?

So long as this was a purely American whim we made no moan. But now, we see, some British fleet or squadron in the Pacific has crept into the news as a "task-force". Frankly, we can see neither seemliness nor sense in this amendment. It will make a hash of some of our finest literature, as a

glance at the following examples will confirm:

*"On the road to Mandalay
Where the old task-force lay . . ."*

*"All in the Downs the task-force was
moored . . ."*

*"But yield, proud foe, thy task-force
With the crews at England's feet
And make submission meet
To our King."*

*"Drake he's in his hammock till the
great task-forces come . . ."*

* * * * *

And, for that matter, what is a Youth Movement? Where does Youth move: and is the journey really necessary? Is it really true that the other day there was a World Youth Week? And when does a Youth Movement stop? We mean, if it is very successful and keeps the membership going does it gradually emerge into a

Middle Age Movement? If that is in order we propose to start our own Middle Age Movement, for we will not conceal from you that our own generation, when young, was satisfactorily lively and mobile, and indeed is not entirely covered with flies at the moment, as the names of Montgomery, Wavell, Cripps, not to mention Joad, may suggest to the well-read reader. Strangely enough, too, we still have occasional ideas, and, though this, no doubt, will get a laugh, can almost claim that we are as well-equipped with "ideals" as some of the Youth we see about.

All these questionings must not be taken to detract from our reverence for Youth, which, as a matter of fact, we rather like. But the notion of all the lambs getting together, making faces at the older sheep, and bleating about their superior wisdom in the conduct of cosmic affairs is not one that we can

take very seriously. Even our excellent Sea Scouts and Air Cadets do from time to time have to accept a little information and advice from some creaking member of a Middle Age Movement. Why, when it comes to the difficult business of government, they should be considered fit to herd and huddle and pontificate alone, we cannot tell.

Nor, to get back to our words, would anyone let anything so silly pass them if it wasn't wrapped up in woolly words like "Movement." Put it in plain language, "Youth Planners for Post-War International Monetary Co-ordination," or "Youth Conference on Banking and the Export Trade," or even "Youth Manifesto on Education" and there would be some wholesome smiling. But talk about a "Youth Movement," and everybody bows.

* * * * *

A Member of Parliament receives the Blue Star for the following contribution. A citizen who had been "reserved", was sent to prison, and lost his "reservation". His M.P. tried to get him reserved again, and received this message from the Appeal Board:

"The Board proposed that further deferment should not be granted, and pointed out, *inter alia*, that deferment had been automatically cancelled due to the involuntary loss, by Mr. W—, of his personal liberty resulting from action by the appropriate authorities. This loss of liberty extended from the 27th February 1944 to the 21st April 1944."

Could tact go farther?

* * * * *

A naval officer assures us with creditable dismay that a recent Admiralty Order contained this gem of prose:

"The dining-halls to have adequate serveries for the issue of meals so designed as to enable meals to be PRE-PLATED in them and distributed from them."

"Serveries"! "Pre-plated"! Come, come, your Lordships!

We hear also that you are guilty (in Admiralty Fleet Orders) of "draftees" (men drafted) and even "amputees" (amputation cases).

"Draftees" is, logically at least, one better than the Army's "escapees", which means, believe it or not, prisoners who have escaped. Surely, if everything must be expressed in one word "escapers" would do? "Escapee", as a warrior points out, should be reserved for the inattentive sentry or negligent commandant of the prison.

Another naval novelty just brought to our attention is the verb "to passivate," as in:

"The system . . . is to be adopted . . . in order to passivate the internal surfaces of the boilers."

It is not in our dictionary, and we cannot tell you what it means—a spot of bromide for the old calorificators, maybe.

* * * * *

We are not sizeable or even appreciably keen on "sizeable" and "appreciable", much used recently in military reports. Even the great Eisenhower said something like "sizeable forces," or "a sizeable number of prisoners" (we forget, with apologies, what he did say), and "our patrols" are always (or were) meeting "appreciable resistance".

Well, sizeable, meaning "fairly large"—not large but not wholly insignificant—has been in common use since about 1680. You could conveniently and sensibly apply it to a fish which was small, but not so small as to deserve attention or admiration. In 1818 no someone wrote in *Blackwood's* "We find the cerebellum sizeable but not remarkable". "Appreciable", Bobby, means capable of being recognized by the mind or senses—in other words, pretty small ("There is hardly an appreciable element of Celtic in the French language"). But when the commanders and war-correspondents use these words they generally mean something not pretty small but pretty large. Anyhow, they are both unsuitable expressions for military affairs where more precision is required. You will not find the sailors talking about sizeable vessels or appreciable winds. There are boats, barges, ships, etc., there are light airs, breezes, strong winds, gales, hurricanes (with various precise sub-divisions). So please let us hear no more about sizeable or appreciable numbers of troops or prisoners. You may go now, General.

* * * * *

The shameless makers of vile unwanted mongrel ize-words are still busy. Not for the first time we are invited to the "filmization" of a famous author's novel—why not "film"? Thousands of pompous firms say "finalize" when they mean "settle" or "finish". All the Services, we believe, discuss the "winterization" of camps, quarters, and so on; and we really can't have that, for though the word can be found in a dictionary (not always a good defence), it must mean "making like winter", which, as a warrior shrewdly remarks, is the opposite of what is intended. Why

not "weather-proofing" or "winter-fitting"?

"Hospitalize" still rages. It does not mean, as it should, to turn a house into a hospital, but to send a man to hospital. "Institutionalize" is of the same breed, and just one worse.

Most horrible, perhaps, in this class is the tailors' latest:

SUITS DE-AUSTERIZED FREE

and

"The National Federation of Merchant Tailors have sent out invitations to the trade organizations to join in discussions on de-austerizing."

Game, set and match. Diploma.

P.S.—"But, then," cries some indignant tailor, "it's all very well. What *are* we to say?" And, as always, we see the point. A good warrior tells us that there is a verb αὐστηρῶ in the Greek Lexicon (which we don't possess). But this is not conclusive. Indeed, that is what we are fighting, the suggestion that our modern jerry-built ize-words are as good as the Greek -ίζω-verbs. For one thing, our language is still English in the main, not Greek. Now, we were given "austerity" suits. So far, so good—or bad. But we never heard anyone talk about "austerizing" our clothes; and we don't believe anyone did. So "de-austerize" has not even that excuse. We have a "Security silence" at this moment; but when the news is announced at last, if anyone says it has been "de-securized" we shall not applaud. *But what is the tailor to say?* Well, what he means is that he is going to make (-ize) the foul austerity suit normal and good—or, as he might put it, "to normalize the austerized". We won't have that, of course. But why not

AUSTERITY SUITS MADE GOOD—FREE

And the conference could be about "the tailors' return to normal", "the retreat from austerity", "conversion of austerity suits", or what you will.

A. P. H.

o o

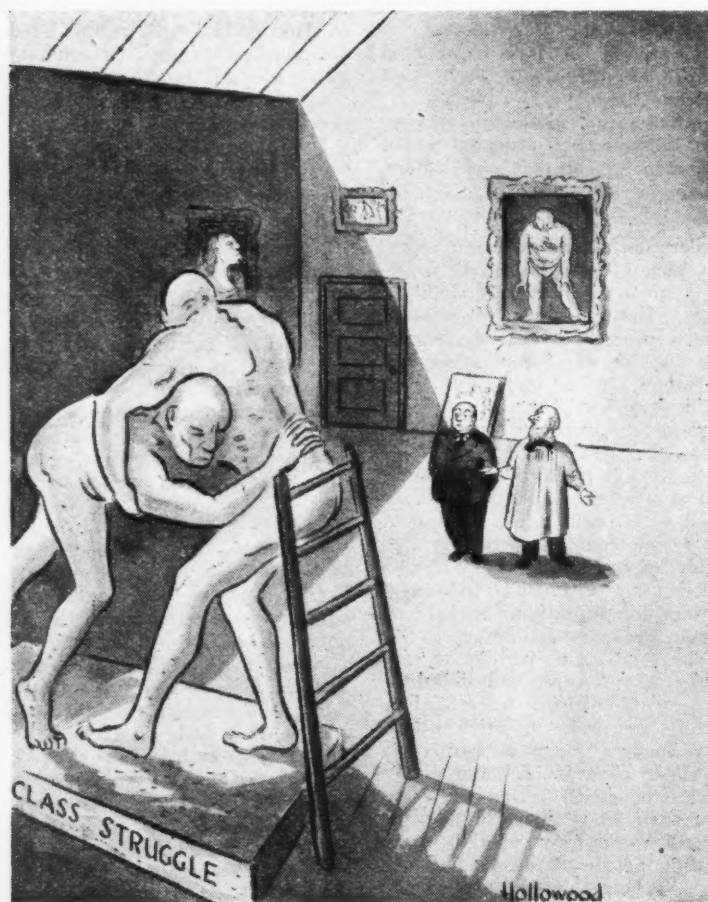
At the Ballet

SHE leaped as Giselle
Like a gazelle,
But the rest of the fillies
Gave me the Willis.

o o

On Tu Fu, the Chinese King of Verse

THE poems
Of Tu Fu
Are all
Tu Fu.



"... And then they go and publish all these bloomin' White Papers on Social Security."

The Neo-Honeymoon

THERE were once two young moderns who confessed their love upon a Surrey hilltop in May.

"Darling," he said, "I love you."

"I love you too, darling," said she.

He was about to place his arms around her when he gave a cluck of annoyance.

"We're talking in clichés," he said with disgust.

"So we are," she agreed—with perhaps slightly less disgust.

"How ghastly," he said, frowning at the verdure.

"Intolerable, darling," she responded firmly.

"Lend us a pencil," he said. "I'll think up some new phrases."

In considering where to spend their

honeymoon they employed the same pioneering spirit.

"We must at all costs," he said, "avoid the conventional. Our honeymoon must not be an echo of a thousand other honeymoons. And besides the conventional, which includes conventional unconventionalities, we must flee the glamorous."

"Flee it like the plague," she nodded.

"We owe it to modern thought and life not to offer our contemporaries a merely traditional example of a honeymoon."

"Clovelly or Looe," she said, and shuddered.

"Scotland," he said with quiet repugnance.

They discovered, however, that new

places for a honeymoon were undiscoverable. This disconcerted them.

"Our honeymoon *must* be neo," he said firmly. "If we can't invent new places we can at least devise new modes. A bicycling honeymoon was once an innovation. A honeymoon in a submarine would, as far as I know, still be an innovation."

"But we haven't a submarine, darling."

"That's true," he allowed. "We must think further than submarines then."

They thought, and discussed, a great deal further than submarines. The only satisfactorily new ideas that came to them were impracticable owing to expense, lack of a friend possessing an igloo in Hampshire, and so forth.

They even, in desperation, called in the honorary secretary of the literary and musical society of which they were co-founders. She sighed with them but produced no novelties. All she did was to increase their sense of responsibility.

"I may say the society is looking to you both for the completely neo idea," she said brightly.

Our two young moderns were not without stern courage. When at length they were obliged to face the unpalatable truth they did so as responsible leaders of contemporary thought and not as mere persons in love.

"The neo idea for a honeymoon is out," he said. "If we had been going to discover it we should have done so by now. And I for one do not care to let the society, and the circles of thought beyond it which are affected by it, down."

"Nor me," she said, no less stoutly.

"Rather than follow in the steps of the frankly glamorous or the unashamedly bourgeois and be branded retrogressive by all thinking people, I would prefer to ask you to hand me back my ring."

"And I would prefer to hand it back to you," she said, doing so.

Since they were quite genuinely in love this tale could easily be mistaken at this point for a modern intellectual tragedy. It has, however, a happy ending, for those who can bear such things.

As a matter of fact they were married less than a fortnight later. On their return from their honeymoon they were greeted by their literary and musical society with tremendous applause.

The honorary secretary said, panting with enthusiasm: "We welcome our newly-married co-founders back to our circle with warm and proud hearts. We owe them a very great deal. One

has just returned from work on a psychological novel in Inverness. The other has been composing a tone poem in a barge near Basingstoke. Separate holidays for husbands and wives long married are familiar to us but it has been left to these very gallant pioneers to think of separate honeymoons—the completely neo idea! Hip! hip, hip, hurrah!”

Economic Slang—a Glossary

THERE can be no group of thinkers more consistently maligned than the economists. To be asked “And what do you do?” is embarrassing enough even for people engaged in the popular occupations. No ordinary individual confesses baldly “I am an artist (poet, statesman, professor, statistician, fellmonger, landscape gardener, etc.).” He hedges, plays himself down with “Oh, I write a bit, you know,” or “I dabble in fellmongery.” But what answer can the economist give? There are no euphemisms for his calling—none of reasonable length, anyway. And so the poor creature must declare himself and submit to the inevitable ridicule.

When the guffaws have settled into a steady chuckle someone is bound to say “So you’re one of those, are you? Are you still agreeing to differ?” (The chuckle then reverts to guffaws.) It is most unfair. The average man—say someone gainfully employed in the £250-£500 a year income-group—has never forgotten or forgiven the economists’ part in the great slump of the early ‘thirties. There is really nothing to forgive except some slight ambiguity in the phrasing of their advice. The public could not be expected to realize that the contradictory injunctions—“Be Thrifty, Save!” and “Now Is The Time To Buy!”—which appeared side by side on every hoarding in the country were part of a masterly co-operative plan to preserve the *status quo*.

If you, reader, have nursed grievances against the economists on this account I beg you to amend your judgment in the light of this overdue disclosure. And now, perhaps, you will allow me to return to my glossary.

Taxes. There are two main types, both heavy. The “indirect” type are often called popular because the average person finds them less odious than “direct” taxes such as income, death, super and purchase. Indirect taxes are imposed on everything but

a few goods we never use. Mr. Gossport, the wit, has called them “day-light taxes”—a bitter comment if ever there was one. In war-time the Government taxes everything up to the hilt, including your memory.

If the rich are soaked more thoroughly than the poor the tax is said to be “progressive.” This means that we are approaching a time when everyone will have nothing. If the tax weighs more heavily on the poor it is described, among other things, as “regressive.” All taxes lumped together may be called “aggressive.”

A chain-smoker (allowing him eight hours for narcosis) pays about £84 a year in tobacco tax and throws something like £12 of this away in stubs or fag-ends. Thus he tosses ninepence or tenpence into the gutter or the ash-tray every day. No wonder a lot of men are trying to make their women-folk give up smoking!

Drink is even worse. The other night I happened to be collecting statistics at the “Crown and Anchor.” Believe it or not, the bar-counter was awash with good war-time beer. I estimated the yield in taxation at five shillings. Three dabs with the bar-maid’s dish-cloth and it was gone. Economists sometimes devise taxes that cost more to collect than they bring in—the idea being to stimulate employment.

Overdraft. This is just one of those things you either have or don’t have. It-beggars description.

Fiduciary Issue. This is the amount of currency issued by the Bank of England in excess of its holding of gold or silver. It is fixed legally at a figure that can only be exceeded by being altered. For this and similar reasons the British Constitution is said to be elastic. Before gold-rationing began you could take £3 10s. 10½d. to the B. of E. and get an ounce of gold for it. This gold was eleven-twelfths fine or 22-carat. The other twelfth (or couple of carats) was base metal and was included by way of contrast and to help the recipient retain a sense of proportion.

A minion of the Bank told me the other day: “We have precious little precious metal left, but we are not giving up hope. Our back-room alchemists are working overtime. They can produce quite a nice gold, but unfortunately it has rather an offensive odour and rings badly. Until these defects can be removed or reduced production will not be a commercial proposition.”

HOD.

So Far So Good

“Allied commanders are known to be extremely well made so far.”—*Lancs. paper.*

Commercial Candour

“OUR SPECIALITY
SANDWICHES
fresh cut.”

Handwritten advertisement in London.



“‘Take this to Balham,’ ’e sez. ‘Wot, Balham?’ I sez. ‘Lumme, you ain’t arf stretchin’ our lines of communication!’”

At the Play

"FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE" (EMBASSY)

THE Garden of Eden dance-hall was a frowsy place, set surprisingly below the grey silhouette of Edinburgh's Castle Rock. About nine o'clock on the night that the "Whose Baby Are You?" company arrived in Eden—Boogie-Woogie and Auld Reekie make a curious pair—a dreary *Andrew*, who happened to be a brother of the Bishop of Midlothian, walked out to get a cab and found himself battling in salt water. At once the dancers heard the plaint of sea-gulls and the wash of the tide. Their hall was poised upon the pinnacle of the Bass Rock off North Berwick, twenty miles from home.

It had landed without a jolt. *Father Malachy's* miracle was complete. The little Benedictine monk, away from his monastery after fifteen years and grieved by the views of an Anglican parson, had chosen this other Eden for a clinching experiment. Miracles were mediaeval, were they—out of date? Then at nine o'clock the *palais de danse* should skip across to the Bass. It did. *Malachy* had proved that the age of miracles endured, but his faith drew him into the breakers. Although Bishop and Canon could not reprove this gentle soul, *Malachy* had to navigate a sea of troubles—dull-witted police, shouting news stories (one, if our sight was true, on the back page of *The Times*), claims for damages, flamboyant showmen, sneers and scepticism, a rebuke from Rome, and, at length, the conversion of the rock-bound Eden into a hall even rowdier than before. This was intolerable. Early on Christmas morning *Malachy* was on the Bass, miracle-working again, and presently—with melodramatic trimmings missing from the silent outward passage—the Garden of Eden flew home to Edinburgh and settled on its old foundations. Scoffers could claim if they liked that it had never moved. No matter. *Malachy*, tired of the world, was returning to the monastery—Paradise Regained.

Here is a fantastic satirical comedy, happy in its basic idea and in two or three of its people. *Malachy* himself, mild, desperately in earnest, makes the piece. Mr. W. G. FAY has a lovable simplicity. The Bishop, an independent Scot—"He wears his mitre like a tam o'shanter," says someone—is another honest character, realized warmly by Mr. JAMES WOODBURN; and the Canon (Mr. TONY QUINN, as Irish as Macgillcuddy's Reeks) and his young curate (Mr. EDWARD BYRNE) both serve their parish well.



TELLING THE BISHOP A MOVING STORY.

Bishop of Midlothian. Mr. JAMES WOODBURN
Canon Geoghegan Mr. TONY QUINN
Father Malachy Mr. W. G. FAY

It is a pity that Mr. BRIAN DOHERTY, who shaped the play from Mr. BRUCE MARSHALL's novel, lost his first rush of inspiration. At one moment we race along a smooth road; then, as it were, the tyres go flat and we are bumping over cobbles. The rest of the journey is a patchwork of good and (with the dance-hall group) indifferent. The production is at fault: we imagine that in New York, where the play ran for three years, it was done far more crisply, with no time left for awkward questions. But Mr. FAY understands his *Malachy*, and the piece—in spite of its palpable flaws—is likeable and worth a whole scurry of fluttering farces. J. C. T.

"THE GAJETIES" (WINTER GARDEN)

The first-night curtain rose about six-forty and at past ten o'clock the Gaieties were still in progress. At the end Mr. LESLIE HENSON, in a neat speech, thanked the audience for having sat through two productions in one, and promised future cuts. One would submit for his axe a gabbled ten minutes from the trial scene of *The Merchant of Venice*, dragged in for the sake of a dolorous jest about meat coupons.

This apart, the peripatetic revue quivers with good performances, and we can trust Mr. HENSON's final judgment. He must preserve at all costs the sketch in which his own mimicry of Mr. ALFRED LUNT is a flash of exact observation and Miss HERMIONE BADDELEYslyly exaggerates the prowling of Miss FONTANNE. The episode, by Mr. DENIS WALDOCK, is only a half-and-half affair, but these superb drolls transform it, as they do most of the scenes in which they appear, from the Cockney grousters of the opening to the Dockyard figureheads. Mr. HENSON, with his inimitable croak, elastic-sided cheeks, and round-corner glances, is ready for anything from the one-note ballad of Mr. B. C. HILLIAM to the witty precision of his Lunt, or the concert-party exercise of "Our Town Band." Miss BADDELEY is, as usual, either deep in a dump—see her figurehead—or cooing like a throaty turtle-dove. Her best outbreak is a monstrously coy, prune-and-prism impersonation of "a very prudish nude."

A third planet, Mr. WALTER CRISHAM, is as agile a comedian as dancer, an inventive fellow ever seeking fresh moods and postures new. Miss AVRIL ANGERS—with her one railway-signal gesture, Miss HELLA TOROS in song, Miss PRUDENCE HYMAN in dance, and Mr. GRAHAM PAYN in both dance and song: these are other props of a London heir to the famous camp show, *Africa Stars*. The cast, it must be said, does much more than its crowded society of authors to sustain the evening's gaiety. J. C. T.

Report to Council

OUR allocation of temporary houses seems to have put the cat among the pigeons. At any rate, things are going to be a bit crowded because we are only entitled to one of these structures, and the problem of who to put in it will probably fall to a lottery. Mr. Tingle has been through the claims and thinks it would be asking too much for all the waiting applications to share the one accommodation, even though it has built-in cupboards that could serve as roomettes at a severe push. It is made of steel that has already been pressed to the utmost, and its life with fair play is given by the specialists as ten years. That again suggests to Mr. Tingle a selection of applicants on the grounds of what they have previously done with residences of a more endurable character, as it stands to ransom that a person who cannot make a hundred-year house last five minutes isn't going to get very far in a portable model.

The next consideration is the site. Regulations say this can be even more temporary than the domicile itself, and when a family has reached sardine proportions it can be transported from round them and moved to another cabbage patch, leaving the first family to fend for themselves in the permanent market. There will no doubt be some Job's comforts over this, but Mr. Tingle asks members to save them up for the really cold weather and concentrate for now on the pressing matter.

The more Mr. Tingle thinks about the coming arguments the more he is convinced that although the sides are prefabricated the side-issues are anything but.

J. TINGLE,
Sub-Housing Committee.

The Green Veil

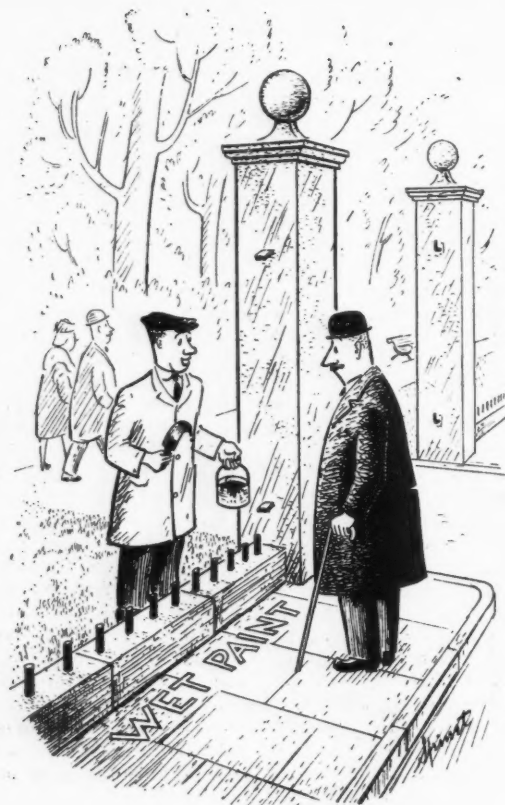
IT was the Willow who first wore it
Until her weaving fingers tore it.
On to the moss-grown wall,
Weeping, she let it fall.
The Ivy for a shroud intended it
But Hawthorn with her needle
mended it,
Washed it and spread it out to dry.
A March wind, galloping by,
Seized it and threw it over Ash and
Oak
Who, for a joke,

Tied pale pink ribbons on it
And made the Almond wear it as a
bonnet.
Almond ripped off the bows and took
a tuck in it
To make a frill for Chestnut's wrist,
But Chestnut's treacherous thumbs got
stuck in it.
Her neighbour, Quince,
Unwound it, twist by twist,
Gave it a rinse
And by the ivory moon sat all one night
Embroidering it in stars of white
For gipsy Cherry, Plum and Pear
To twine in their wild hair.
With the wind's combing
The tangled stars shuffled out,
Leaving a web of thinnest tissue
For Silver Birch
To gather in the April gloaming

And crochet into a lace fichu
Which (much puffed out)
She wears outside the church.
So it is passed and passed
Continuously
From tree to tree;
Used now for this, now that—
As garland, coronet, hat
And, at the last,
By Poplar, as a broom
To sweep her room.
And then away, away
Into the auction rooms of May
Where all the rags and ribbons of the
spring are sold
For cowslip gold
And auctioneering crickets pass
Between the tufty stems of grass
Crying "For sale! For sale!
A green veil!"



"Cab, Sir?"



"... so I wrote to my M.P. and finally I got back the job I was doing before the war."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Women and Poetry

It may be an insult, at the moment, to women to say that we expect from them the gentler kind of poetry, the "nature" poetry—"my heart is like a singing bird whose nest is in a watered shoot." However that may be, it is almost shocking to discover what a relief these poems can be after the conscientious struggle with hordes of slim, ferocious and unintelligible volumes. Peace! with nothing to disturb it except for the half-pleasure of a bittersweet nostalgia for childhood.

"By quiet waters, by green fields,
In winter sweet as summer hay . . ."

The lines are from SYLVIA LYND's new *Collected Poems* (MACMILLAN, 6/-). Mrs. LYND is the most charming of our pastoral poets, the most faithful to her own countryside. She is with John Clare, Andrew Marvell, and the early Blake, the quietists of our literature—you can sometimes catch echoes of them among her beautifully-turned verses. They are verses of deserted gardens and old houses, fields

full of flowers and grasses and a stile where a lover has cut initials to prove "that in a world called sad and full of trouble, two people once were happy, being in love." The keynote is to be found in "Wistaria: In Memoriam, N.F.D."—and it is this: a child does not understand beauty, for it thinks of it as happiness: a grown woman understands beauty, but longs in every unguarded moment for the happiness of the child.

There is something of the same quality in the work of the American poetess, HELEN GRANVILLE-BARKER. Her *Nineteen Poems* (SIDGWICK AND JACKSON, 10/6) have just been published over here and they show a delicate appreciation of the changing seasons—"those sequences enchanting, terrestrial years." Some of them have a true mystical impulse—"Alone Amid the Desert As I Lay" and "In Wheeling Procession," which describes the cool dark hours of night, each with its own suffering and its own spiritual inwardness. Others suggest the Modern Primitive school of American painting. Its distinction is to look things flatly in the face and to see them as if for the first time with all their freshness on them. Modern primitives either come off or else they don't, and this is also true of Mrs. GRANVILLE-BARKER's work, but she has the ear and the eye of a poet.

Michael, the subject of the poems in *Sheet-Anchor* (SIDGWICK AND JACKSON, 5/-), was a naval officer who died on duty in the summer of 1940. He died of septic endocarditis, which is an occupational disease among ships' captains on active service—the effect of prolonged strain. The author of the poems is his wife, and the first thing we must admire is her courage, for the longest is addressed "To Michael, Dying." But it is a fine work in itself, from the lyrical love-passages, "the awakened heart travelling towards its treasure," to the bitter satire on those who cannot understand,

"For all we would not hear from Christ
A hundred Messerschmidts sufficed . . ."

In a short introduction ERIC LINKLATER reminds us of the unspectacular work of the Navy and its countless dead. "We, who wear our names a little longer, do so by their courtesy, and should in courtesy remember the purpose for which they died."

P. M. F.

A Pagan Retrospect

In *Close of An Era* (HUTCHINSON, 16/-), Mr. PERCY COLSON, who is now in his seventies, gives an amusing and picturesque, though rather disconnected, account of English life in the quarter of a century before the last war. London between Piccadilly Circus and Hyde Park Corner towards the close of the eighties is his idea of an earthly paradise, and perhaps the best thing in the book is his imaginary return to it from the battered London of to-day, his relief as he walks down a Piccadilly free from motor buses and enlivened by the jingling harness of hansom cabs, his delight, as he turns into St. James's, on finding a Clubland "wholly given over to men and not in the least democratic," immune from women attendants and dotted with pages in buttons, and his solid satisfaction as he surveys the cold buffet in Brooks'. He is not, however, an uncritical admirer of the past as compared with the present. What the well-to-do have lost in the last fifty or sixty years, he says, is nothing compared with what the poor have gained. "Contrast," he writes, "the dirty, badly-dressed, inarticulate little boy of Victorian days with the bright, clean, intelligent youngster of to-day"; and he recalls with a shudder how on Mafeking Night, as he emerged from St. James's Hall, where he had been listening to Kreisler,

his opera hat was knocked off and an excited and beery lady seized him and begged him to join her in a roundelay. He is critical, too, of the insensitiveness or hostility to the æsthetic element in life which was the other side of the Victorian attachment to order and security. "Moral uplift," he writes of the nineties, "was still rampant," and he traces its baneful influence in the art of Leighton, Watts and Millais, and in the sentimental or ponderous music of the age. Even in the Temple Choir, he says, "they sang the Psalms to those ghastly four-square Anglican chants we all, alas, know so well, quite oblivious to the fact that many of the Psalms are really lovely lyric poems." Even Elgar jars on him. "I hate mysticism; such philosophy as I possess is purely pagan," he writes in dismissal of Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius." A pagan, as that word was understood in the nineties, Mr. Colson reserves his enthusiasm for Beardsley and Wilde, Housman, and Ernest Dowson and Charles Conder, and repels, curtly and without argument, the "silly" view that they were decadent and *fin de siècle*.

H. K.

Gipsy Hall

It is high time a woman of candour, sense and creative ability deplored the hard lot of the young mothers—"unconsidered, torn and isolation-ridden"—who have been "amongst the greater of the war casualties." The protest is a side-issue in Mrs. FRANCES DONALDSON'S *Four Years' Harvest* (FABER, 7/6), which, as a sequel to its author's *Approach to Farming*, is in the main a record of success. The success, however, was costly, and the risks Mrs. DONALDSON ran when, with her husband fighting and two small children at home, she dismissed her bailiff and set out to farm for herself, are impressive. She will be read, one suspects, for her clever and courageous solutions to her immediate Warwickshire difficulties—bullocks or milk, long leys or short leys, and so forth. But there is more to her than that. She sees farming as "inextricably bound up with the problems of civilization"—an attitude only compromised by her own highly empirical approach. She approves, for instance, an untested programme like nationalization, because it would suit her particular type of farm. (In any case we are all proletarians in the Midlands, even the rural worker and his wife.) A more historical perspective—plus her own ardour for moral rather than technical education—might hope to arrest the rot.

H. P. E.

Alfred Williams

Alfred Williams was born in a Wiltshire village in 1877, left school at eleven, and after some years as a farm labourer became a forge hand in the G.W.R. works at Swindon. In his spare time he studied English literature, from which he passed on to Latin, Greek and eventually Sanskrit. At the age of twenty-seven he wrote a poetic drama, "Sardanapalus," by which Sidney Colvin and Watts-Dunton, to whom it was shown in manuscript, were considerably impressed; but his real subject was country life, and in the four or five years before the last war he published several volumes of verse and prose dealing with Wiltshire scenes. Although his health was undermined by the double strain of writing and the railway factory, he became a gunner in the R.F.A., and served in Ireland, Scotland and India. The ten years after his return to England were even more arduous and exhausting than his youth. His books did not sell, and the fruit he grew on the plot of land surrounding the cottage which he and his wife Mary had built with their own hands brought in very little money.

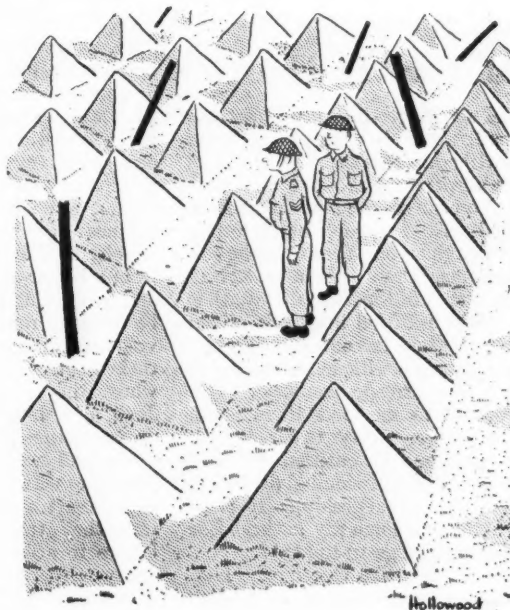
Early in 1930 Mary was discovered to have cancer, but some weeks before her death in the late spring her husband had a heart attack and died before her. "I am grateful he went first," she said, "for I can bear the pain of parting better than he could have." Mr. LEONARD CLARK, in his biography of *Alfred Williams* (BASIL BLACKWELL, 17/6), speaks of his achievement as "supreme, and certainly matched by few others in this century." Few will agree with this estimate of Williams's pleasant unexciting verse. The poetry of this book is in its facts, not in its quotations.

H. K.

Wherefore Plough?

Even the progressive must admit that it is the backward countries which grow most food per acre and whose soil is usually best conserved. Mechanism eliminates men; and depopulation and erosion go hand in hand—a state of affairs that has given great concern to American "agronomists." The most drastic remedy proposed comes from Mr. EDWARD FAULKNER, who has not only noted the contrast between virgin soil and what is usually left of it by cultivation, but has practically reversed the process in an Ohio market-garden begun on a builders' dump in 1930. Subsequent field experiments convinced him that humus should be mixed with the top spit, not put underneath it; and *Ploughman's Folly* (JOSEPH, 8/6) urges the abolition of the plough and the incorporation by a disc-harrow of green manure and other humus-makers just under the surface. The soil is then firmed with a "compression-marker" before planting, a process which conserves what water supply there is—just as a foot-print on a seed-bed stays damper than the surrounding tilth. Mr. FAULKNER'S crops, he declares, are admirable drought-resisters; and except in swamp lands he would have no tile drainage at all. Indeed, his system of water-control is one of the most interesting aspects of his able and revolutionary book.

H. P. E.



"You should have seen the ones in Egypt."



"And when the bomb fell the old clock started and no one's been able to stop it since."

Not For the Use Of

I AM sitting reading my Christmas mail, weeks late, in my room in Dirltbad. This room is about as big as a parish hall, and about as cold. You can see the Himalayas from Dirltbad. All the people in the letters say "I imagine you roasting in the sun on Christmas Day." As a matter of fact it was on Christmas Day that some of the roof fell in and it rained on my bed, which has only one blanket, issued by people with ideas similar to those of my correspondents.

It occurs to me that there is an obscure Indian Army Order to the effect that one is entitled to *three* blankets on, commissioning (it makes one feel like a battleship). It is so cold that I overcome my natural fear of storemen and go to the Q.

For I do not like storemen. I do not like the way one has to preface everything one says to them with "I'm sorry to trouble you, Q," in an ingratiating voice, as though the

dismal mountains of trousers and boots behind them were sort of *active*, demanding an intense concentration from which storemen can ill be spared to bother with the mere people who are going to wear them. I dislike their absurd fog of technicalities. I do not see why the perfectly simple business of receiving shirts, drab angola, and even more boring things from a bigger and even gloomier store, and just giving them out again, should be wrapped round with all this talk of vouchers and scales. I do not like their Scottish corporal assistants, to whom they say wearily, "All right, Jock, *give him one*," at which Jock drops another fag-end into the cold tea dregs and vanishes into the gloom, returning with something two sizes too big. Least of all do I like the mean way they turn their long hours of leisure to account by learning Indian Army Orders. To me this shows a certain lack of imagination. If I were a quartermaster I might learn Malayalam (I bet you don't know what *that* is), or write some astounding

revelations; or perhaps I should construct some strange machine out of all the pieces of respirator.

However, I go. Our Q, a dried-up man who used to be in Palestine but is now unfortunately here, is deep in an angry conversation with his Jock about someone who has had the effrontery to get his men's boots mended on the wrong day of the month. "I'm telling them, I don't get any more *money* for doing this job," he keeps on saying.

Eventually he looks round at me. "Good morning," he says wintrily.

I start. "Good morning, sir," I say. (This is ridiculous.) "I'm sorry to trouble you, Q, but I've come about my blankets."

I might just as well have added "and Mother says will you be calling next Wednesday?" for all the impression it makes.

"Blankets, sir?"

"The three I get on commissioning. It's in Indian Army Orders," I say, hoping that these magic words will be enough.

He at once goes into a rambling

explanation of how officers were *once*, in 1941, allowed to *buy* blankets on commissioning, and how even this is now stopped by an amendment. It's *never* been an issue, he says. And in any case it was only for North-western Army.

"But 'Mr. Hostletonks had them issued."

"Well, sir," he says, "if you can show me the Indian Army Order . . ."

While we are talking he keeps answering the telephone and saying briskly "Yes, sir. Two hundred rifles," or "But we drew rations for three hundred and *fourteen* . . . I can't just now, sir; I'm busy" (a meaning glance at me) "with Mr. Tumpin about his blankets." I strongly suspect that Jock, who has disappeared, is ringing him up from the next room. In the end I feel quite ashamed of wanting blankets, with the war and all. I back towards the door. "All right, Q," I say, "I'll get some in the bazaar." (This is mere bravado. It would be easier to get a steam yacht in our bazaar than blankets.)

But he is going to have his money's worth. He drags down two enormous files ("I'm not saying you're *wrong*, sir") and proceeds to wade through them. Blankets, hospital. Issue to flood refugees. Scale for Boys, Buglers and Prisoners. Blankets, emergency issue—

"I'm an Emergency Commissioned Officer," I say brightly. He does not smile. I retire after an hour with no blankets.

At night I tell them in the mess. "Why didn't you ask me?" says 2/Lt. Hostletonks. "It's Indian Army Order 211."

The next day I go in to the Q and say triumphantly "Indian Army Order 211."

"Oh, you didn't tell me you meant *personal issue*. All right, Jock, give him them."

Spring in England, 1945

SHALL I send it to the cleaners or will it drop to pieces?

Eat it up, ducky. It's lovely dried egg! For sale, one poker.

Turn off the water for the love of Mike! Do you like my new hat? Only £5 10s. Lemons!

Keep your arm down and the patch won't show.

Laundry? In a month's time, lady.

Full up! Full up!

18 coupons—Mackintosh or summer suit?

Potatoes are off, sir.

Any old rags?

Football

CAPTAIN SYMPSON and I found our first week as travelling Welfare Officers rather heavy going. 5684 Company of Blochuanas, with whom we were staying, had just come back from the other side of the Mediterranean, and everything was rather at sixes and sevens. Sympson's lecture on "The Cathedrals of England," which he had borrowed from a canon he met in Ismailia and on which he had relied to give him a flying start, was delivered to two cooks and a man who was waiting to go before the Major on a charge of telling the C.S.M. that he had lost both his undervests in action, whereas when he was searched he was found to be wearing three, which took his mind off cathedrals. The rest of the Company had gone off in response to a sudden call to unload tanks from a ship, the sort of light fatigue that invariably crops up during weeks set aside for training and recreation.

"I consider it a shame," said Sympson bitterly, "that trifles like unloading tanks should be allowed to interfere with my Welfare programme. If anything occurs to upset the football match on Saturday I shall complain to the Area Commander."

This was the first I had heard of a football match.

"It is still what may be called in embryo," said Sympson. "Generally speaking, as you know, African troops are very keen on football, but this particular crowd do not seem to have played it very much, so to give the first match a bit of special interest I am going to persuade Major Smuts to captain the 5684 team. We are playing the neighbouring Company, 5065, and I shall also persuade Major Alastair McConnachie, O.C. of 5065, to lead his own men into the field."

"You'll never do it," I said with conviction. "Major Smuts is too decrepit, and Major McConnachie is a Scotsman."

"If Smuts goes into strict training at once," said Sympson, "and knocks off cigarettes, he will be fit by Saturday; and as for McConnachie being a Scotsman, that will make it easier. Look at Glasgow Rangers."

"I'm perfectly certain Major McConnachie never played for Glasgow Rangers," I said, "and what I meant about his being a Scotsman was that Scotsmen have always proved in the past to be able to stand out against what may be called your persuasive powers."

Sympson, however, was determined not to be baffled over the football match, as the cathedrals of England business still rankled, and he opened the campaign at lunch by asking Major Smuts if he had ever played football in his younger days.

"What do you mean, in my younger days?" asked Major Smuts indignantly. "How old do you think I am?"

Sympson tactfully evaded a direct answer, merely saying that nobody could hope to keep his youth in the climate of Egypt, and that grey hairs came early when one commanded Africans.

"I used to play a good deal before the war," said Major Smuts, "and I consider that I am still perfectly fit."

Then Sympson went over to see Major McConnachie.

"I've just popped in to make final arrangements for the football match on Saturday," he said, "but a complication has arisen. Major Smuts insists on leading his own side into the field. Possibly one of your subalterns would agree to captain 5065? Major Smuts said that he knew you didn't play yourself . . ."

By the time he left, Major McConnachie had agreed to lead his own team, and the Africans, who had hitherto looked rather coldly on the match, began to train with enthusiasm.

"I've never seen them so keen about anything," remarked Captain Lomas. "I hope there is nothing behind it. Some of them have got one or two old scores to pay off against the Major."

Everything would no doubt have gone according to plan if Sympson had not trapped the Colonel into promising to referee. Next morning at breakfast the Colonel realized that he had committed himself to an unpleasant and probably undignified experience, and immediately called an urgent Company Commanders' Conference for the time of the match.

Major Smuts and Major McConnachie pretended to be frightfully upset at not leading their men. They hated to let them down, they said, and the only way they could partly make up for it would be to persuade two other white officers to deputize for them. Perhaps Captain Sympson and Captain Conkleshill would lead the respective teams?

After a short struggle we consented, and it proved to be one of the roughest of our Army experiences. There is a bright side to every picture, however, and it enabled us, for the next week, to study Welfare as carried out in a typical Middle East hospital.

Parlementairy Procedure

WHEN peace breaks out I do hope we shall keep to the rules as to how it should be agreed upon, and not ignore them in the chaotic way everyone ignored the rules of war when this shemozzle started.

But I hear nothing yet about any *parlementaires*, who, according to the Hague Convention, are the first essential.

Perhaps you do not know what a *parlementaire* is? Is it:

- (a) A conversazione (or crumpet tea) in the House of Commons?
- (b) A style of coiffure devised by Lady Astor?
- (c) That icy draught in the Press Gallery?
- (d) A folk-dance round the Gallup Poll?

Well, you are *all* wrong. It has nothing to do with Parliament, and the authorities, who almost apologize for the phrase, say it comes from the ancient verb "to parley."

Neither Nazi nor Jap stood on any ceremony about firing the first shot, but they are likely to be more careful about the last. There is no keener stickler for fair play when he is losing. And I imagine each is now moistening his thumb, and flicking through the pages of the very text-book which also lies before *me*, as he tries to discover a foolproof method of throwing in the towel.

I can tell them, then, that the very first thing is to select a *parlementaire* who will not be afraid to step on to the battlefield and call for attention, please. It is "of the highest importance" (*vide* the rules) that every soldier on both sides, from the highest to the lowest, shall know what the *parlementaire* is about, so that "no untoward incident may arise." And in the interests of his own safety the *parlementaire* is recommended to "wait until there is a propitious moment, or to make a detour to avoid the danger zone," which sounds to me like trying to wheel the pram down to the beach while the recruits are firing on the open ranges.

To assist in claiming attention the

parlementaire is advised to bring with him a trumpeter and a drummer. Though, if he heeds my advice, he will exchange these for a tray of drinks, like a waiter at Lord's. People are much more likely to stop what they are doing and look up with interest. Which makes you realize what an idiotic entrance Hess made. He did not understand the first thing about the English temperament.

I was once at a county cricket-match which was held up for several minutes whilst a gentleman who had the sun in his eyes rose from his seat on one side of the ground and solemnly crossed to the other, without even bringing a telegram. The bowler paused. The batsman leaned on his bat. The fielders turned to watch the stranger's progress with circumflex eyebrows. He walked solemnly on between the wickets, slap across that sacred piece of turf, without even murmuring "Excuse me!" and continued at exactly the same pace until he had reached the far seats, when he made room for himself by a lordly gesture and sat down.

If the Germans will only recognize this obliging side to our national

character they may perhaps decide to play upon it by sending their *parlementaire* across no man's land carrying an umbrella and bringing a small dog on a lead, which would be far safer than letting Goering step out in all his medals, absolutely inviting some sniper to pick them off his chest like ping-pong balls on a fountain.

Frankly, I do not see the point of the musicians at all. But it is laid down that on reaching the front line the *parlementaire* must say good-bye to any people who have kindly kept him company on the way, and go alone into the enemy lines, courteously asking to be directed to the O.C. So perhaps it is intended that a small German band should stay behind and entertain our troops during the interval.

Mistakes in the past have, in this respect, proved costly.

After the battle of Mukden the Russians, wishing to give in, thought the best way would be to play the Japanese National Anthem. This was misinterpreted, and firing began again hotly. Another unfortunate incident was due to the *parlementaire* not only arriving on horse-back, but doing so at the gallop, the horse having bolted. On reaching the first ditch the animal jibbed, and the *parlementaire* was shot over the parapet, together with all the kind messages he was bringing and the contents of his pockets. I can find no instance in the records of one arriving by push-bike, though to appear on one with elliptical wheels (like the comic chap at a gymkhana) might please, especially if he leaned it against the trench and walked in by the wicket gate like a milkman. But unless I am much mistaken the Yanks will want something very different from all this, and will insist on filming the occasion. That means the wretched *parlementaire* will have to do his piece over and over again all day, until the producer is satisfied and has got his lights right. Maybe they will suggest that he comes over the horizon with the setting sun behind him, his big feet turned out at twenty minutes past eight, his bowler being flat, old, and soft-brimmed, and his umbrella very badly rolled. And that he lead the symbolic figure of Peace by the hand, looking like the Kid. And what I am so afraid of is that, unlike the Russians, we shall then let the whole side down and come out crying.



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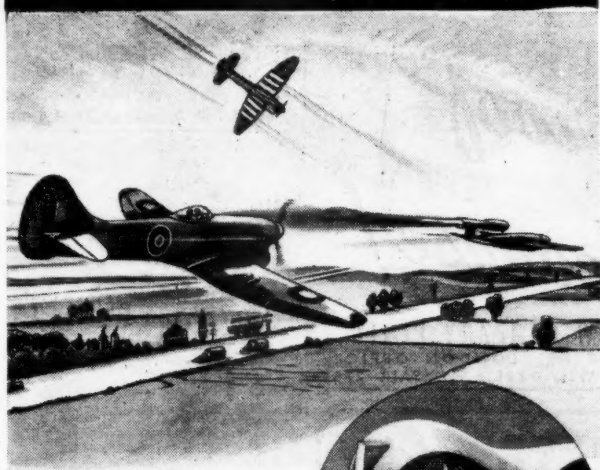
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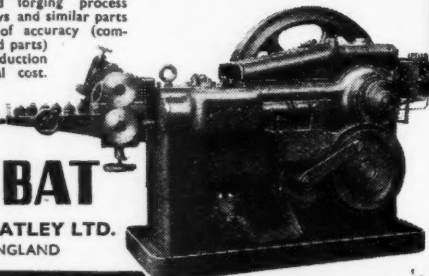


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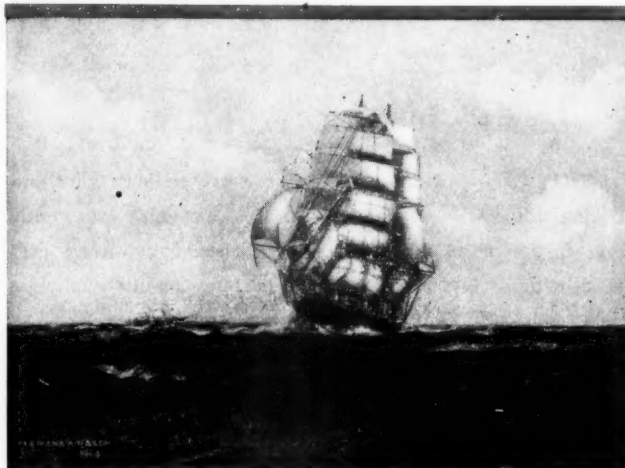
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